A STUDY OF THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES (SMCS) IN TERMS OF THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY, ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANS (SPIP) IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF MEERUT DISTRICT

A

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a vital role in shaping a nation's socio-economic landscape. It not only equips individuals with critical thinking abilities but also empowers them with crucial competencies, such as goal setting. Beyond traditional textbook learning, education fosters the growth of practical skills, capacities, and values, while also guiding individuals in charting their career paths and contributing to the establishment of a progressive society with modern values.As a catalyst for social and economic progress, education enhances the functional and analytical capacities of both children and young adults, creating opportunities for personal and collective advancement. By imparting valuable knowledge and skills, education paves the way for productive employment in the future.Furthermore, the development of education enhances effectivenessand fosters democratic engagement. Consequently, special attention ought to be directed towards improving education at the elementary level, as it forms the foundational pillar for higher education, child development, and the future prosperity of the nation.

ElementaryEducation

Elementary education forms the bedrock of the entire education system. The Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) is a significant provision embedded in the directive principles of State policy and the 86th amendment to the Constitution of India. Since India gained independence, achieving UEE has been a pivotal educational objective, generating widespread awareness about the importance of elementary education throughout the population.

The primary aim of UEE is to ensure that all segments of society, with special attention given to SC, ST, OBC, girls, and minority communities, have access to high-quality education. It serves as the fundamental base on which the entire education system relies. A key initiative in pursuing UEE is the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which has been successful in enrolling millions of children and bringing elementary education right to their doorsteps, even reaching out to first-generation learners in underserved areas.Operated on the principle of community-ownership of the school system, the SSA addresses the nationwide demand for quality basic education. Operating in a mission mode, it aims to provide the poorest children with an opportunity to enhance their capabilities

through access to community-owned, high-quality elementary education.In conclusion, elementary education serves as the foundation of India's education pyramid, and the UEE stands as a major constitutional goal. The SSA plays a critical role in achieving this objective by enrolling millions of children, particularly from marginalized communities, and offering them quality elementary education, owned and supported by their local communities.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

The 'Education for All' movement, better known as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, was launched in 2000-2001 as the flagship program by the Indian government. This initiative was designed to ensure elementary educationfor all the children between the ages of 6 to 14 years. Its primary objectives are to address disparities related to social, regional, and gender factors, with a strong emphasis on involving the community in school management. The SSA encompasses two main aspects:

(i)It involvesexecuting various elementary education schemes and programs.

(ii)It includes allocating budget provisions to reinforce and enhance elementary education.

SSA is a time-bound program aimed at achieving universal elementary education. It serves as a means to promote social justice through foundational education and operates as a collaborative effort between the central government, state governments, and local authorities. Additionally, it provides states the opportunity to develop their unique visions for elementary education.SSA also endeavors to effectively involve School Management Committees (SMCs),Panchayati Raj institutions and Tribal Autonomous Councils for the management of elementary schools. For the fulfillment of the program's goals, various strategies have been devised, including capacity building for establishing Block level resource centersand active engagement with local community groups. These centers work to create District Elementary Education Plans (DEEP).

SSA, key measures include the recruitment and training of teachers, motivating parents and students, and offering incentives such as scholarships, uniforms, and textbooks. Furthermore, the program directs to establish schools with adequate educational facilities and enhance existing school infrastructure by constructing additional classrooms, providing sanitation facilities, clean drinking water, and more.The SSA represents a commendable initiative by the Government of India (GOI), aiming to achieve UEE and

raise awareness about its significance among citizens. By providing access to basic education, this program also contributes to improving the overall standard of living, positively impacting factors.To achieve the objective UEE through the SSA, the GOI placed significant importance on providing free and compulsory education to all children aged 6 to 14. Finally, in 2009, the parliament passed an Act known as the "Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009" to fulfill the longstanding aspiration of UEE. Below is a detailed explanation of the RTE Act, 2009.

Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009

On April 1, 2010, The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 was implemented. With RTE Act in effect, the right to education was granted the similar legal significance as the right to life, as enshrined in Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. According to this law, every child between the ages of 6 to 14 years is entitled to receive eight years of elementary education within a suitable classroom environment located in their local vicinity.

As per the Act, the State holds the responsibility of covering any expenses that hinder a child from accessing education. This includes enrolling the child in school, ensuring regular attendance, and guaranteeing the completion of eight years of schooling. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has stressed the significance of providing the right education to children and young individuals. He believes that nurturing the younger generation with proper education is vital for securing nation.It is mandatory for all private schools to allocate 25% of their total enrolment to children from weaker and disadvantaged sections communities. The selection of these children will be done through a straightforward random process, and no seats in this quota can be left vacant. Once admitted, these children will receive the same treatment as all other students in the school and will be financially supported by the State.

All schools are required to adhere to the norms and standards specified in the Act, and any school failing to meet these criteria within three years will not be permitted to operate. Private schools must apply for recognition, and if they fail to do so, they will face a penalty of Rs. 1 lakh. If they continue to function without recognition, they will be subject to a daily fine of Rs. 10,000.Additionally, an academic authority is establishing

norms and standards for teacher qualification and training. All teachers in every school must comply with these standards within a period of five years.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has been assigned the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of this momentous Right. To facilitate this, NCPCR has established a dedicated toll-free helpline for registering complaints. With the formal notification of this Act, NCPCR expresses its enthusiasm for actively contributing to the effective execution of this initiative.The effective implementation of elementary education programs relies greatly on the active participation and involvement of the local community. This symbiotic relationship between the school and the community yields mutual benefits. To achieve the objective of universalization of elementary education, the RTE Act, 2009 mandates the formation of SMCs in all elementary schools. These SMCs play a vital role in facilitating community engagement and support in the education system. A brief description of SMCs is provided below:

School Management Committees

RTE Act, 2009, in its efforts to decentralize the education system and promote parental involvement in decision-making processes, mandates the formation of SMCs. According to sections 21(1) and 21(2) of the Act, all government and government-aided schools are required to establish SMCs comprising elected representatives of the local authority, teachers and parents or guardians of the students.These SMCs are instrumental bodies involving all government and government-aided elementary schools to enhance the effectiveness of the education system and encourage parental participation in matters concerning their children's education. The SMCs consist of two key components: the general body and the executive council. Together, they play a crucial role in fostering a more inclusive and participatory approach to school management and decision-making.

General body of School Management Committee

- The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009 aims to decentralize the education system and encourage parental involvement in decision-making processes. In accordance with sections 21(1) and 21(2) of the Act, all government and government-aided schools are obligated to establish SMCs.

- SMCs improve the efficiency of the education system and foster parental engagement in matters related to their children's education. Comprising the general body and the executive council, SMCs collectively play a vital role in cultivating a more inclusive and participatory approach to school management and decision-making.
- In its initial meeting, SMC will conduct an election to choose 1 parent member to serve as the president of the committee. The elected parent will hold the position of president for a term of 1 year.
- The headmaster, serves as the nominated member secretary of the SMC. The member secretary is responsible for recording and maintaining the minutes of the meetings. Additionally, they play a crucial role in assisting with the implementation of the decisions made during the meetings of the SMC.
- A minimum of 20% of parents/guardians should be in attendance during the meetings of SMC. The expenses related to these meetings are covered by school grants or allocated from specific accounts/head designated by the state government. SMC make decisions on various agenda items pertaining to the enhancement of school operations, the school development plan, and the utilization of government-provided school grants.

Executive Committee of School Management Committee

The members of the executive body of the SMC are elected as per the RTE Act, 2009. To ensure the effective functioning of the executive body, it has the authority to co-opt additional members to provide expert suggestions. These co-opted members may include an Anganwari worker, Mahila Mandal representative, eminent educationist from the area, NGO member, Yuvak Mandal representative, school teacher (currently employed or retired), health worker, and others. While these co-opted members actively participate in the discussions of the SMC, they do not have voting rights.

The Executive Committee holds the responsibility for implementing the decisions made by the SMC. To achieve this, monthly meetings of the Executive Committee are scheduled on the first Saturday (or the first Friday if Saturday is a holiday) after the lunch break. The member secretary of the Executive Council is responsible for recording the

signatures of all members. The significant decisions made during the meetings will be prominently displayed on the school notice board for public awareness.

Elementary Level School Management Committees

The elementary level of education encompasses children between the ages of 6-14 who are studying in grades 1st to 8th. The outcomes of the current study will aid in assessing the awareness level of SMC members regarding their roles and responsibilities for the promotion of UEE.

The School Performance Improvement Plan

The School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) serves as a roadmap for a school, outlining the necessary changes required to enhance the school's performance, particularly in terms of student achievement. It highlights immediate activities that will aid teachers and theSMC in identifying the necessary improvements to overall achievement and closely monitoring the progress of these improvements within the school (GES, 1999).To ensure the effective allocation and utilization of funds to schools, the SPIP was introduced as a prerequisite.

The current state of elementary education in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, is promising, exhibiting better progress when compared to other regions in the state. Given this positive outlook, the investigator deems it necessary to conduct a study that specifically examines the operations of SMCs concerning their administrative accountability, organizational planning, and implementation of the SPIP in primary schools within Meerut district. The primary goal of this investigation is to explore the role and functioning of SMCs in enhancing the status of elementary education in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.Through the present investigation, the investigator aims to explore the significant contributions made by SMCmembers and the measures implemented by SMCs to promote girls' participation in elementary educationto provide education to the children with special needs (CWSN), and support students from the scheduled caste (SC) communities. Addressing these issues is of utmost importance in the current context.

Keeping this into consideration, the following research work is proposed undertake a research study entitled

"**A Study of the School Management Committees (SMCs) in terms of their administrative accountability, organizational planning and School performance improvement Plans (SPIP) in primary schools of Meerut district"**

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. The study the formation, powers, and responsibilities of SMCs in elementary schools in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.
2. To study the role of SMCs in promoting elementary education in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, based on the RTE Act, 2009.
3. To analyse the functioning of SMCs concerning the time gap, agendas, attendance and other issues related to SMC meetings
4. To study the perspectives of the elementary school teachers, village Pradhan and Panch members regarding the role and functioning of SMCs in promoting UEE in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.
5. To study the awareness level among SMC members regarding their organizational planning and administrative accountability in the SPIP and their responsibilities in promoting UEE in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.
6. To identify the challenges faced by SMC members in promoting UEE and SPIP in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, in context of RTE Act, 2009.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sujatha and Rao (2000)[15] discovered that Village Education Committees (VECs) in the area were actively engaged in the planning and execution of educational initiatives, holding regular monthly meetings. Remarkably, more than 80% of the heads of households, including those not serving as VEC members, attended these meetings, indicating a high level of community engagement. The VECs demonstrated a strong commitment to the schools' welfare by collecting funds from the community and using them to pay teachers' salaries. Moreover, in about 70% of the villages, the community actively participated in constructing new school buildings, contributing through manpower, materials, or financial support.

Jagannathan's (2001), [4] studied the potential advantages of forming an alliance between the government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to accomplish universal primary education in India. The research highlights various areas where collaboration between the two entities can yield fruitful results:

1.Targeting Underserved Children: Through collaboration, the government and NGOs can work together to reach and provide education to children in underserved areas, ensuring that no child is left behind.

2.Enhancing Quality: By pooling resources and expertise, the government and NGOs can work towards improving the quality of education provided in primary schools.

3.Developing Trainers for Teachers: Collaborative efforts can lead to the establishment of a cadre of trainers to enhance the skills and capabilities of primary school teachers, ultimately benefitting the education system.

The study suggests that NGO models are valuable for training institutes of teacher, contributing to better-prepared educators.

Dash and Panda (2001), [2] found that the majority of the Village Education Committees (VECs) were highly effective in promoting the comprehensive development of primary schools. All the VECs displayed satisfactory management capabilities in

overseeing primary school affairs. They also successfully organized various awareness programs to bring about positive changes in the attitudes of villagers. The facilitation role played by the VECs was particularly impressive.VECs increase enrolment, reduce dropout rates, organize cultural activities, and foster a conducive school environment. Moreover, they actively supported teachers in preparing Teaching-Learning Materials (TLM), which significantly impacted the local primary school environment.The VECs efficiently fulfilled their roles in facilitating, promoting positive attitudes, driving school improvement, engaging in economic activities, and executing various miscellaneous tasks to promote development of their respective schools.

Ed. CIL (2002), [3]emphasizes that training provided to VEC members led to a significant increase in parent-teacher interactions, with around 94% of parents starting to visit schools. Additionally, 63% of parents reported having developed a positive relationship with teachers. The study also revealed that many parents believed that education would be more valuable if it led to better employment prospects for their children. However, poverty remained a significant barrier to their children's access to education, resulting in an increase in dropout rates due to financial constraints and children's involvement in domestic work.Furthermore, the study observed that the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) had a transformative impact on people's attitudes towards education, indicating its positive influence on the educational landscape.

Yadav (2006), [13]studied role and performance of VECs in Haryana and proposed several recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of these committees:

1.Nomination Criteria: Yadav suggested that only individuals who are at least matriculate (10th-grade pass) should be nominated as VEC members. This criterion aims to ensure that members possess a certain level of education and understanding of educational matters, which can contribute to better decision-making.

2.Fixed Tenure: The study recommended having a fixed tenure for each VEC member. This helps in maintaining continuity and stability in the committee's functioning, ensuring that experienced members can provide valuable insights over time.

3.Mandatory Meeting Attendance: Yadav emphasized for compulsory for all VEC members to attend the committee meetings regularly. Active participation of all members is crucial to effectively address school-related issues and make informed decisions.

4.Cooperation from Community Leaders: The study highlighted the importance of community leaders extending full cooperation and support to VECs. Such support can lead to better functioning and management of schools, ultimately benefiting the students and the community.The study also uncovered certain shortcomings in the functioning of VECs in Haryana:

1. Limited Responsibility Sharing: There was a lack of shared responsibility among VEC members, which may hinder the overall effectiveness of the committee in school management and development.

2.Limited Contributions:Encouraging more VECs to contribute to school infrastructure development can lead to improved facilities for students.

3.Lack of Coordination: Despite having two representatives from the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) in each VEC, there was no coordination and rapport between the PTA and the VEC. Enhancing collaboration between these two entities can lead to better alignment of goals and more effective school development initiatives.

The study's recommendations aimed to address these issues and strengthen the role of VECs in Haryana in supporting the improvement and management of schools for the benefit of the students and the community.

Bandyopadhyay and Ramya (2008),[1]In their study, girl's enrolment has shown significant improvement since, 1990s. However, despite this progress, the upper primary and secondary still have considerable gender gap. This disparity in genderis interconnected with other forms of social inequality, viz., religion, caste, ethnicity, etc. In light of these observations, the researchers recommended the implementation of enabling policy guidelines to address the challenges and improve the quality of schools. The focus should be on creating better opportunities for girls at higher levels of education. By adopting effective policy measures, it is possible to promote gender equity in education and create a more inclusive and equal learning environment for all students.

Nayak (2009), [6] highlights the crucial role of direct community involvement in fulfillment of goal of universalization of primary education in his book entitled "Community Participation in the Universalization of Primary Education". Efforts have been made to strengthen school-community relationships, recognizing their potential to bring about both quantitative and qualitative improvements in primary education across the country. In his book author conducted a study in 8 villages across 2 districts of Orissa, focusing on the community's role in planning, managing, and organizing school activities, particularly through SMCs.The study also revealed that many parents believed that education would be more valuable if it led to better employment prospects for their children. However, poverty remained a significant barrier to their children's access to education, resulting in an increase in dropout rates due to financial constraints and children's involvement in domestic work.

Rao (2009), [8]assessed the functioning of the SEMC in the tribal region of East Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh and revealed that the minimum participation of community in education improvement. The members of the school education management committees had limited awareness of SSA. Approximately 67% of all respondent categories knows about SSA. Among the schoolteachers87.2% were aware of SSA, while among PRI membersand parents of school-going children, the percentage was 61% and52% respectively. Approximately 17% of SEMC members proposed that raising awareness among tribal parents would encourage their involvement in school-related activities.Other suggestions included introducing a daily mid-day meal program, ensuring availability of drinking water on school premises, promoting the use of Teaching Learning Material (TLM) by teachers, and providing better infrastructure for schools.

Govinda and Bandyopadhyay (2010),[7]demonstrate the strengthening and improving local governance have become crucial priorities in the educational reform agenda in recent years. Many countries, including India, have focused on establishing effective local governance as part of broader changes in education system. Their study aims to evaluate the extent of involvement of local bodies viz., panchayats and SMCs in decision-making processes related to education. They also explore the various approaches adopted by different states concerning the governance of education system at local level.

Zingkhai and Asung (2011), [14]published an article in the Sangai Express andshed light on the concerning state of VECs in Manipur. The authors criticize the frequent changes in nomenclature and composition of VECs committeeschaired by the Headman in April, SMDC chaired by the headmaster in May, and SMC chaired by the District Councilor in June of the same year.The authors express their dismay at the mismanagement of the education governance by the Government of Manipur. The ever-changing names and compositions of VECs in the hills raise eyebrows and are a cause for concern. This erratic trajectory does not reflect well on these committees. Initially, the VEC had the Chief/Headman as the ex-officio Chairman until mid-April. Then, for a brief period, it was called the SMDC, with the headmaster as the ex-officio Chairman. Finally, in June, it became the SMC, with the Member of District Council of the area where the school is located as the Chairperson/Chairman, and the headmaster as the member secretary. According to the authors, the involvement of District Councilors seems to have a hidden agenda of misusing the funds granted, which ultimately jeopardizes the 'Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education.' This observation highlights the need for more transparent and stable governance to ensure the effective functioning of VECs for the protection of the rights of children for quality education.

1 **Owusu and Sam (2012), [16]**evaluated the role of SMCs in improving teaching quality in junior high schools within Ashanti Mampong municipal. They used a descriptive survey design and collected data through questionnaires from 30 respondents selected using simple random sampling. The findings revealed that SMCs demonstrated inadequacy in effectively monitoring and supervising the attendance of head teachers, teachers, and students. However, they were considered effective in resolving school community relations and promoting community participation in providing quality education. The study recommended that SMCs in Ashanti Mampong municipal schools should effectively improve the standard of basic education.

Singh and Sood (2016), **[12]** conducted a study to explore the views of elementary school teachers regarding the functioning of SMCs in tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh. Theygathered data from 181 elementary teachers in 60 schools located in Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti districts. The study indicated that SMC members had moderate awareness of

their roles and responsibilities and were not highly involved in school affairs. The SMCs in tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh were rated as moderateto less effective by teachers in terms of different aspects of education. The paper provides a detailed explanation of these findings and offers recommendations for improving the functioning of SMCs in tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh.

Meher and Patel (2018), [5] investigated the functioning of SMC in elementary schools of Jharsuguda district. The primary objectives of the study were to evaluate the current status and functioning of at the elementary level in Jharsuguda and to identify the obstacles encountered by SMC members in carrying out their responsibilities effectively.The research focused specifically on elementary schools in Jharsuguda district and the functioning of their SMCs. The study utilized a descriptive survey method, and a sample of 30 elementary schools was selected using stratified random sampling, with 15 schools from urban and 15 from rural areas.To collect data, the researchers designed self-made open-ended questionnaires, which were administered to the SMC members of the selected elementary schools. The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using the simple percentage technique. The study concluded that all elementary schools had properly constituted and functioning SMCs, effectively covering their respective aspects of school governance and management.

Rajbongshi (2020), [9] conducted a study to evaluate the status of SMCs in monitoring and supervising the UEE in Sivasagar, Assam, India. The sample includes 147 lower primary schools, which were strategically distributed across four education blocks (Demow, Amguri, Kheluaand Nazira). Data were collected through questionnaires administered the SMC members andheadmasters/headmistresses. The questionnaires focused on various aspects, including the SMC members' details, the process and structure of the SMC, their roles and functions, attendance in meetings, and the frequency of their school visits.The study revealed that the SMCs play a significant role in monitoring and supervising the implementation of universalization and compulsory elementary education. The responses from both the headmasters/headmistresses and the SMC members emphasized the importance of the committee's involvement in ensuring the effective functioning of the elementary schools.

Ramakrishnarao and Indira (2021), [10] investigate participationof community in the management of elementary education, which is considered an important strategy in the Government of India's policy initiatives. Under the RTE Act 2009, SMCs are formed in every school and are empowered to monitor all aspects of school functioning. The researchers focused on the functioning of SMCs in elementary schools and selected 120 SMC members from 30 schools in Vizianagaram district, Andhra Pradesh.Data were gathered through questionnaires to understand the perceptions of SMC members related to the functioning of committees. The study revealed significant differences in the perceptions of SMC chairpersons and SMC members concerning their gender, education, and locality. These findings suggest that educational authorities should take measures to ensure the effective functioning ofSMCs in elementary schools.

Sehrawat and Roy (2021), [11]studied the practical engagement of communities in schools through committees like VVECs and SMCs. The study aimed to investigate the expected roles and functions of SMCs and propose measures for their smooth functioning. The researchers used a descriptive survey method and collected data from 390 SMC members through questionnaires. Quantitative analysis using percentages was employed to analyze the data.The findings indicated that while SMC members were involved in monitoring admissions, attendance, and child participation, they did not fully fulfill all the expected roles and functions as outlined in the RTE Act, 2009. The study recommended that SMCs election according to the mandated of RTE Act, and the members should receive orientation and training from school authorities.The results of such study are valuable for planning, implementing and evaluating the functioning of SMCs or community participation in schools. The study emphasizes the importance of adhering to the functions and roles specified in the RTE Act for effective community engagement in providing quality education and achieving true decentralization in municipal schools.

METHODOLOGY

The present study aims to examine the functioning of SMCs in elementary education underSSA in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. To achieve this objective, the research will employ a survey technique using the descriptive method of research. The study will be conducted in the following manner:

1.**Survey Method**: The survey method will be utilized to collect the views and opinions of elementary school teachers, as well as the office bearers and members of SMCs in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. Questionnaires or interviews will be used to gather data from these stakeholders. The survey will focus on understanding the role and functioning of SMCs in promotingUEE in the region.

2.**Documentary Analysis**: Documentary analysis will examine the process of formation of SMCs in elementary schools in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. This analysis will explore the powers and responsibilities assigned to SMCs for achieving the goal of UEE. Relevant documents, such as government policies, guidelines, and records related to SMCs, will be examined to gain insights into their functioning.

By employing both the survey method and documentary analysis, the study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the functioning of SMCs and their contributions to promoting UEE in the context of elementary education in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.

3. Sampling

The data collection process for the present study will involve personal interviews and questionnaires conducted using Google Forms at the district level in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. The study will involve the following personnel:

1. Primary School Teachers: Teachers from different blocks of Meerut, Uttar Pradesh will be selected as respondents. Their views and opinions on the role and functioning of SMCs in promoting UEE will be gathered through personal interviews or questionnaires.

2. Village Pradhan and Panch Members: Selected Village Pradhan and Panch members from Meerut, Uttar Pradesh will also be interviewed or given questionnaires to understand their perspectives on the functioning of SMCs in their respective villages.

The study will be delimited to only the Meerut district, and the selected schools will include all elementary schools' teachers and SMC members who will be available during the data collection period. The selection of SMC office bearers and members will be done using the purposive sampling techniquethrough the self-developed questionnaire will be included in the sample.By utilizing personal interviews and questionnaires through Google Forms, the study aims to gather comprehensive data from teachers and SMC members to critically assess the functioning of SMCs in promoting UEE in elementary schools in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.

RESEARCH TOOLS TO BE DEVELOPED

Following research tools will be developed for conducting the present study:

1. **Questionnaire for Elementary School Teachers**

- The structured questionnaire to elicit the views of elementary school teachers regarding SMCs and their functioning in elementary schools will be developed by the investigator. It will comprise both close-ended and open-ended questions to gather comprehensive information. The questionnaire will focus on the following key areas:
- Personal Details: Teachers will be asked to provide their personal information, such as name, age, gender, and teaching experience.
- Views on SMCs: Teachers will be asked about their perception of the role and functioning of SMCs in their respective schools. They will be encouraged to share their observations and experiences related to SMC activities.
- Problems Faced by SMCs: Teachers will be asked to identify and describe the challenges and issues related to SMCs and school authorities regarding the promotion of UEE in their schools.
- Suggestions for Improvement: Teachers will be invited to offer their suggestions and recommendations to enhance the functioning of SMCs and improve the quality of elementary education in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.

By utilizing a mix of close-ended and open-ended questions, the questionnaire will enable the investigator to gather quantitative data through structured responses and qualitative insights through teachers' narratives and suggestions. This comprehensive approach will provide a deeper understanding of the views and experiences of elementary school teachers regarding SMCs.

2. **Questionnaire for SMC Members**

- The separate questionnaire designed for SMC office bearers and members will cover various aspects related to the functioning of SMCs in elementary schools. The structured questionnaire will have both close-ended and open-ended questions to obtain comprehensive information. The questionnaire will be organized based on the following key issues:
- Personal Information: SMC members will be asked to provide their personal details, such as name, age, gender, occupation, and position within the SMC.
- Composition and Election of Members: SMC members will be asked about their views and experiences regarding the composition of the SMC and the process of electing members to the committee.
- Awareness of Responsibilities and Powers: SMC members will be inquired about their awareness of the responsibilities and powers delegated to the SMCs and their understanding of their roles in school management.
- Administrative Accountability and Organizational Planning: SMC members will be asked about their role in administrative accountability and organizational planning to improve education quality in elementary schools.
- Activities Organized by SMCs: SMC members will provide information about the various activities organized by the committee within the school.
- Promoting Girls' Education and Community Mobilization: SMC members will be asked about the steps taken to promote girls' education, community mobilization, and education of children with special needs (CWSN).
- Contributions for Improving Facilities: SMC members will be asked about their contributions towards improving facilities and infrastructure in elementary schools.
- School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP): SMC members will provide

insights into the implementation of the SPIP and their role in this process.

- Academic and Technical Support: SMC members will be asked about the academic and technical support provided to them by the District Administration.
- Nature of Training Programs: SMC members will share their experiences and feedback regarding the training programs organized for them.
- Co-operation and Support: SMC members will be inquired about the level of co-operation and support they receive from school authorities and other community members in promoting universal elementary education.
- Mechanism for Monitoring: SMC members will provide details about the mechanism they use for monitoring the functioning and progress of the SMC.
- Problems Faced: SMC members will be asked to identify and describe the challenges and issues they encounter for effective functioning.
- Suggestions for Improvement: SMC members will have the opportunity to offer their suggestions and recommendations to enhance the functioning of SMCs in promoting universal elementary education.

By using a structured questionnaire with both close-ended and open-ended questions, the investigator will be able to gather quantitative data as well as valuable insights and opinions from SMC office bearers and members. It will help to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the SMCs in promoting universal elementary education in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.

DATA COLLECTION

The data collection process for the present study will be conducted in a phased manner to ensure comprehensive and reliable information. The researcher will personally collect the data using various methods as follows:

Phase 1: Interviews with State-Level Functionaries The first phase will involve conducting interviews with functionaries at the state level to gain insights into the overall functioning of SMCs in elementary education under SSA in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. These interviews will provide valuable information about the policies, guidelines, and support provided by the state government for the effective functioning of SMCs.

Phase 2: Questionnaire for SMC Office Bearers and Members: In the second phase, the researcher will administer a self-developed structured questionnaire to SMC office bearers and members in elementary schools. The questionnaire will focus on their awareness level regarding the roles and responsibilities of SMCs in promoting universal elementary education. The questionnaire will include both close-ended and open-ended questions to gather comprehensive data.

Phase 3:Questionnaire for Elementary School Teachers: In the final phase, the researcher will collect data from elementary school teachers using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire will seek their views and opinions about the role and functioning of SMCs in promoting universal elementary education. Teachers' feedback will be valuable in understanding the practical implications of SMCs' functioning in schools.

Documentary Analysis Apart from primary data collection, the investigator will also review different documents and reports related to the formation, powers, and responsibilities of SMCs in elementary schools. This documentary analysis will complement the primary data and provide a broader understanding of the context and framework of SMCs in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.By conducting interviews, administering questionnaires, and reviewing relevant documents, the researcher will gather comprehensive and reliable data for the present study. This multi-phased approach will enable a comprehensive investigation into the functioning of SMCs in promoting universal elementary education in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, under SSA.

TREATMENT OF DATA

The information collected from elementary school teachers and office bearers of SMC through the self-developed questionnaire will be subjected to data analysis using appropriate statistical tools. The main objective of the analysis is to understand the views, perceptions, and experiences of the respondents regarding the role and functioning of SMCs in promoting universal elementary education in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.

The following statistical tools will be used for data analysis:

1.Descriptive Statistics: Mean, Mode, and Median Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize and describe the main characteristics of the data collected. Measures such as

the mean (average), mode (most frequently occurring value), and median (middle value) will be computed to provide a clear understanding of the responses given by the respondents. These measures will help in identifying the central tendency of the data.

2.Frequency Analysis Frequency analysis will be conducted to determine the frequency of occurrence of responses to each question in the questionnaire. It will provide insights into the distribution of responses and help identify the most common and less common opinions or views.

3.Software for Analysis To perform the data analysis efficiently and accurately, statistical software tools such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), Stata, and MS Excel will be used. These software tools are widely used for data analysis and have various functions and features to handle large datasets and generate meaningful insights.

4.Qualitative Data Analysis (Open-Ended Questions) For the open-ended questions in the questionnaire, a qualitative data analysis approach will be used. Responses will be categorized and themes will be identified to understand the qualitative aspects of the data.

By using these statistical tools and software, the researcher will be able to draw meaningful conclusions from the data collected and present the findings in a clear and concise manner. The analysis will provide valuable insights into the functioning of SMCs and their impact on promoting universal elementary education in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1.The process of forming SMCs in elementary schools and understanding their defined roles and responsibilities will be investigated through documentary analysis.

2.The effectiveness of SMCs in promoting UEE will be evaluated based on the perspectives of elementary school teachers and office bearers and members of SMCs in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.

3.The scope of this study will be limited to Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.

4.The content and methodology of training programs organized for SMC members will be examined through documentary analysis and the input provided by SMC members

themselves. No direct observation of these training programs will be conducted by the investigator.

5.To achieve the objectives of this study, a combination of primary and secondary data sources will be utilized. Self-developed interview schedules and questionnaires will be used for collecting primary data, while government documents and reports will serve as secondary sources of data.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The SSA is a program launched in India to achieve the goal ofUEE in a mission mode, with a clear time frame. In line with this effort, the Government of India enacted the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) in 2009, which made the constitution of SMCs mandatory to improve community participation at the school level. This move aims to decentralize the education system, making it more effective and encouraging parental involvement in decision-making.

The present investigation seeks to study the functioning of SMCs in elementary education and identify any obstacles hindering community mobilization to improve educational status in the Meerut district. By understanding the administrative accountability and organizational planning of SMC members in primary schools, the study aims to contribute to the SPIP and develop intervention strategies to strengthen the functioning of SMCs in elementary schools.

The results of this study could be valuable for implementing SPIP in other districts of Uttar Pradesh. Overall, this effort aims to interlink schools and communities, fostering mutual responsiveness for the betterment of elementary education in the region.

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